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General Mannerheims League for Child Welfare...

General Mannerheims League for Child Welfare

[Helsingfors]

[1921]

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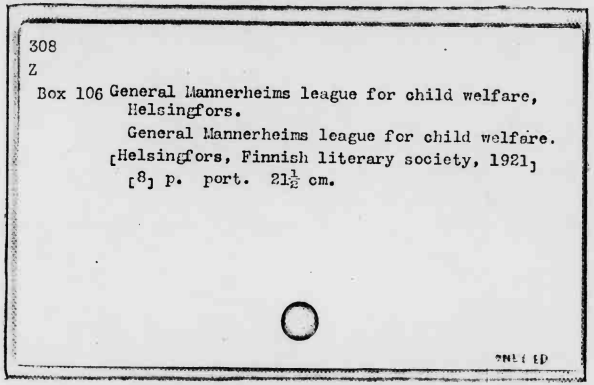
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Box 106 General Mannerheims league for child welfare, Helsingfors.
General Mannerheims league for child welfare.
[Helsingfors, Finnish literary society, 1921]
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GENERAL MANNERHEIMS LEAGUE FOR CHILD WELFARE

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Box 106

G. Mannerheim

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

GENERAL MANNERHEIMS LEAGUE FOR CHILD WELFARE

G. Mannerheim

Finland. Minister of Foreign Affairs
2-23-22

TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF FINLAND

On the first anniversary of the outbreak of the fight for Finlands freedom (28th Jan. 1919) I set aside 50,000 marks for the promotion of undertakings for the care and training of those children who had lost their guardians through the course of the War — irrespective of the side upon which they had carried arms. My purpose was to aid, not only in solving the most burning question of the immediate present — the healing of the open wounds of war, but also to exhort all noble minded friends of the Fatherland to unite in one healing labour for the re-moulding of the community, and first of all to ameliorate the lot of those, who to me, seem to be in the greatest need, whose suffering is most unmerited and perhaps, hardest to bear.

I knew that I only expressed a thought and desire that was realised and felt by the whole of our people. During the last two years, this idea has been stated in many and various ways. Great efforts have been and are being made in order to remove the causes of a discontent which too often has been justified, and the bitterness resulting from that discontent. How then can both discontent and bitterness be fought with success while the number of orphans, of children neglected and undernourished, bodily and mentally, can be counted by the thousand; how can the rift between the ranks of the community be closed, how can the hatred which has been sown be dispersed, while great numbers of our upgrowing race must enter the lists of life with undeveloped and mis-directed mental equipment.

MS. room 16, 1923
FB7

It seems to me that all effort is made in vain if our community, created and tried by the storm, is not remoulded from the base, if an organisation is not formed which shall give a security that the whole of the youth of the country shall be fostered in health, in labour efficiency and in love of the Fatherland. State, Local Authorities and Private Enterprise show a praiseworthy interest in the removal of evil-conditions; but the resources of the state have been insufficient, the Local Authorities do not seem to have been in a position to effect more than is demanded by the barest necessities of the homeless, while the private associations, which were responsible in the greatest degree for work in the sphere of Child Welfare, have been compelled, in view of the ruling high cost of living, to restrict their activity, in many cases even, to suspend operations altogether.

The future security of our country as an independent state, its domestic peace and development as a cultured community, require that the whole of the youth of

the country shall be trained to become good citizens. I have no doubt but that those who intend still to labour and dwell in the land will contribute their utmost to the extension of private exertions for the Welfare of the Children, with the ultimate aim, that, through Local Organisations, spread over the whole of the land, unified under the leadership of a Central Committee, this work may be so undertaken, that all of Finlands Children — from the Mothers arms and during the whole of their childhood, shall enjoy, as a right, that sympathy and fostering care which only can assure that they shall be trained as good citizens of the State.

For this purpose there has been formed in Helsingfors a League for the Welfare of the Children of Finland.
I beseech all the Men and Women of Finland to embrace this most urgent matter with compassionate zeal and to contribute to its support.

MANNERHEIM.

pon the initiative of General Mannerheim, the Liberator and late Regent of Finland, a League for the Welfare of the Children of Finland was founded on the 4th October 1920. Immediately after the Inaugural Meeting — the appeal upon the opposite page of this leaflet was issued by General Mannerheim, addressed to the Men and Women of Finland. This appeal awakened an immediate and wide spread interest in all parts of the country. Members were soon counted by the thousand. The Financial basis, essential to the initial and continued activity and success of the League was assured by the generous response made by private individuals and by business undertakings to a personally written letter from General Mannerheim himself.

The League which is named after its Founder and Patron "General Mannerheims League for Child Welfare" embraces as its field of operations the whole country. Its aim is — "by the promotion and encouragement of voluntary effort in the sphere of Child Welfare — to foster as far as possible, the healthy development, bodily and mentally, of the coming race, in so far as the work is not undertaken by the State or by Local Authorities, by Law or by Special Enactments".

The League endeavours to realise this aim by means of an intensive, yet popular Informative Propaganda, and by uniting all those who are actively engaged or are interested in Child Welfare, whether Private Individuals,

Associations or Societies, into one correlative and cooperative activity.

The Constitution of the League admits of private and collective membership, the latter of which consists of the already existing local or national societies working in some special line of Child Welfare, or of Local Sections resulting immediately from the operations of the League. The Private Members are either active working members, or passive, contributory members. The Roll of Membership already includes over 12,000 names. The number of Local Sections, which shows a steady increase is now (Aug. 1921) thirty.

The general direction of the League's activities is exercised by a Central Council consisting of 40 members. This Council elects an Administrative Executive consisting of Five Members, three of whom form a Quorum, which must be unanimous upon all effective measures, and which meets in weekly session.

The League is working in three main lines of action, a. Hygienic, b. Moral, c. Informative.

The League proposes, in time, to include within the scope of its administration all the various ramifications of Child Welfare, from pre-birth up to the age of 18 years. But with the view of obtaining the best practical results the Executive has decided, at the outset, to restrict its purview to rigorously defined lines of action, which, it is considered, call for immediate and definite development. These urgent disideratae are a. the promotion of rational care of infants and young children and b. the coordination, direction and strengthening of measures for the moral education and training of older children (11—18 yrs).

For the effective realisation of the first of these, the Local Sections are advised to proceed with the organisation of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, where instruction can be given with regard to the care of infants and young children. The Central Executive seeks thoroughly to establish this branch of its work by the organisation of Courses — intended especially for qualified sick nurses and midwives, and other keenly interested persons — for a thorough intensive training in all matters concerning motherhood. This work has received the support of a substantial grant from the National Exchequer, the continuance of which is dependant upon the success and continuance of this work. The League already has in operation a Travelling Bureau of Information, which will coordinate with the work of a trained nurse, who will give short courses to young and expectant mothers.

For the moral training of elder children the League aims to function through the media of formally organised Clubs, of Recreational Institutes, and also by the establishment of Day Homes.

In order to spread information upon questions of Child Welfare the League issues publications and intends to establish a Central Consultative Library in Helsingfors.

Although the Executive of the League has limited its immediate activity to clearly defined lines of action, the Local Sections — with due reference to the authorised scope and purpose of the League — may decide freely upon their own sphere and mode of operation.

General Mannerheims League for Child Welfare has not yet completed a full year of executive existence. It cannot show, therefore, any great, positive results. The general interest that has been shown in its projects, the known desire of all classes to assist and to accelerate its labours, strengthens, however, the opinion that the League, in the future, will do a great and beneficial work for the coming race in Finland and through it, for the Fatherland.

GENERAL MANNERHEIMS
LEAGUE FOR CHILD WELFARE

MARIEGATAN 5, HELSINGFORS
FINLAND

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